

## Grimoire

### Chapter 8

Straw. Jake had everything else he needed, all he had to do now was find some straw. How hard could that be?

A quick internet search and his plan formed.

He'd get a bag of straw from a pet store, maybe stock up on some other ingredients while he was out. Then he'd head over to the address the grimoire had given him, the place where that old woman lived. He had no idea what he'd do when he got there - scope it out, maybe. Learn a little about the grimoire's previous owner. And then he'd come home, create the Sinful Straw Doll.

And have sex with Jess.

Just the thought of it made Jake grin. Jess, his beautiful sister, in his arms. Her body, naked. Those beautiful, wonderful breasts pressing against him. Her stunning eyes looking up at him.

Tonight, he'd make it happen.

But first, he needed that straw.

What was it the grimoire had said before? To wear the Crown if he was going to pay the old woman a visit?

His eyes flitted over to it, sat snugly on his desk next to his collection of other spells. He'd need to find a better place to store them all at some point, out of sight somewhere.

Did he really want to do this?

The grimoire had seemed adamant that he shouldn't go. It'd told him the woman was a witch-hunter or something. Could she really be that dangerous, old and feeble as she was?

No. No, she couldn't be that dangerous. And any information he could gain about the grimoire was worth a little risk.

He walked over to the table, picked up the Crown.

Walking the streets with the Crown of False Kings atop his head was surreal. He felt foolish wearing it, had gone so far as to put up his hoodie's hood to hide it. If someone saw him wearing a twig around his head, what would they think?

But, when he walked by a random guy on the street, it wasn't Jake's head the guy's eyes were drawn to, it was his chest.

Or, not his chest. His sister's chest.

Walking by as some random stranger looked him up and down, smiling like an idiot, made Jake's skin prickle. He increased his pace, feeling more uncomfortable and awkward than ever.

On the walk to the pet store, it happened again and again. Men stopping to stare at Jake as he passed, grinning at him, one even going so far as to wolf-whistle in his direction.

They all saw Jess.

And, when Jake walked past a reflective surface, he saw his sister too.

Wearing his black hoodie with the hood up, Jess' face was mostly hidden. Jake's chest, where flat in reality, bulged out in his reflection. Two huge, non-existent breasts straining the material of his hoodie. The reflection's body was shaped exactly like his sister, slim and athletic with a nice, cute butt.

Seeing that image, knowing what everyone around him must be seeing when they looked and stared at him, made Jake feel all the more self-conscious.

How did Jess handle all the attention? All the lingering gazes on her body?

When he finally stepped into the pet store, Jake breathed a sigh of relief. All those eyes on him, roaming his body, the looks in their eyes...

Jake shuddered.

Thankful, the only other person in the pet store was the person behind the counter - a middle-aged woman who seemed far more interested in reading her magazine than ogling Jake.

Now, all he had to do was find some straw.

It wasn't difficult, nor was it expensive. A bag as big as Jake's head was well within budget, and would be enough for countless Dolls. Jake bought it, feeling his heart racing once again. He was one step closer to Jess. One step closer to having what all of the men he'd passed today could only dream of.

The question now was if he should continue with his plan and pay the grimoire's previous owner a visit, or if he should head home and start crafting the spell right away.

It was tempting to call it a day right there. Head home now and forget about the old woman. It'd mean less time outdoors being ogled, and more time to set everything up at home.

But, if he quit now, what was the point of wearing the Crown in the first place?

No, he had to see his plan through. And, with a bit of luck, he'd never have to wander the streets as Jess again. The old woman lived a short ways away from here. It wouldn't take long.

Jake set off in that direction, thinking and planning.

The old woman lived in quite a nice house. Situated on the outskirts of town, with neat stone walls surrounding it and a garden filled with flowers. There was a single car parked outside the building, ugly and beige. For someone obviously not hurting for cash, why have such a hideous ride?

Jake shrugged, walked up to the door and rang the doorbell.

He waited.

When no-one came to answer the door, he rung the doorbell again, glanced around for any sign of life.

Just when he was about to give up and walk away, the door opened to reveal a withered old woman.

He hadn't gotten a good look at her back then, when she'd buried the grimoire. She'd been too far away. But, even then, he'd noticed how stooped and old she'd been. Standing in front of him now, Vera looked even more ancient than he'd believed.

Her skin, leathery and pale, hung loose from her body. A sea of wrinkles layered her face, spotty and cracked and ugly. Her back was stooped, her hands and face almost skeletal from how thin the woman was. She looked about ready to keel over at any moment.

And yet, for how frail the woman looked, her eyes held something more. Something scary.

She glared at Jake.

"What do you want?"

Her voice shook him. Cracked and old, maybe. But the malice and venom was unmistakable.

"Uh," Jake flinched, took a step back. "I, uh. I'm-"

"Spit it out, stupid girl. I don't have all day."

Stupid *girl*. That was right, the hag couldn't see Jake. All she could see was Jess. Unlike earlier, when it had made him uncomfortable, now that fact put Jake at ease.

"I'm doing a project for school," Jake began, recalling the words he'd rehearsed on the walk there. "And I was wondering if-"

"Not interested," the hag interrupted.

Before Jake could say another word, the old woman began closing the door on him. And then, out of the corner of her eye, she caught sight of the thin plastic bag Jake was

carrying, and the straw bag visible through it.

The hag froze, glanced up at Jake through narrowed eyes. She stared hard at him, suspicion merging with her glare.

Instinctively, he took a step back.

Whatever she saw in his eyes, the old woman's shot open.

Jake spun on his heels, began walking away as fast as his feet would carry him.

"Wait," the hag called from behind him. "Stop!"

Jake began sprinting.

She knew. She'd seen something in his eyes, worked it out. She knew he had the grimoire.

No, he was being stupid. Paranoid. How could she possibly know anything? So what, she saw some straw. That didn't mean anything.

Then why had she called after him. Why did she look so surprised? So angry?

He was imagining it. Everything was fine.

As always, his feet carried him to the Pit. He'd taken a roundabout route to get here, sure, but here he was. As always. The scene of the crime.

What crime? He hadn't stolen anything. The old woman, Vera, had thrown the grimoire away. He'd scavenged it. Nothing illegal about that.

Just as he was about to scale the fence and climb into the Pit, something caught Jake's attention. A low rumbling noise.

The sound of a car engine.

He ducked down, hid behind an overgrown bush of weeds.

A beige car turned a corner into view, passed by him, pulled up and parked outside the Pit's fence. Seconds later, the old woman emerged from her car holding a pair of wire-cutters.

Within moments, she'd cut away at enough of the Pit's fence that she could fit through. Carefully, she descended the slope, headed right to the spot she'd buried the grimoire all those weeks ago. Jake watch, horrified, as the hag dropped onto her hands and knees, began digging a hole where the grimoire should have been.

He didn't wait for her to discover it was gone.

Instead, he ran.

When he was just a few streets away from home, Jake remembered the Crown he was wearing. He slowed down, took it off.

His chest stung, legs ached. How long had he been running for?

Longer than he'd ever ran in one go before, that was for sure.

She knew. The old woman, the 'witch-hunter'. She knew Jake had the grimoire.

No, not Jake. He's been wearing the Crown. The hag would think it was Jess who owned the grimoire. Not like that was much better.

As Jake gulped in air, panting and clutching his chest, he began to calm down. So what if the old woman knew someone had the book? It wasn't like she knew where he lived, or even who he was.

Everything was fine. He'd just have to be more careful from now on.

And maybe... Maybe he could get a hold of some of the hag's hairs. If so, it'd be the easiest thing in the world to make a Stick of Broken Memory and undo the damage.

By the time he arrived at his house's front door, Jake was calm, collected.

As long as he had a plan, everything would be fine.

And, right now, his plan was Emily.

The Doll was easy enough to make. Made almost entirely out of plain straw, coated with some burned ash, with a little pebble inside wrapped in his sister's hair. The only bothersome part of the process was the time it took to craft a humanoid doll out of nothing

but straw.

By the time all was said and done, it was nearing evening.

Jess was home right now, and both their parents were out of the house. Now was the perfect time to test out the Doll.

He tore a tiny piece of paper out of a school notebook, wrote the word 'Lust' on it, placed it next to the Doll.

According to the grimoire, when he slipped the little piece of paper inside the Doll, the spell would activate. Jess would be overcome with lust and desire, unable to resist it. And, as long as Jake was there with her, she should, with a bit of luck, lose control and pounce on him.

That was the idea, at least.

Jake stood, picked up both the Doll and the paper note. He inhaled a deep breath, slipped both inside his hoodie's large front pocket, walked out of his room and knocked on his sister's bedroom door.

Moments later, it opened.

Jess was smiling, as always, but somehow it felt odd right now. Forced. There were circles under her eyes, a red puffiness that looked almost painful.

She'd been crying.

"Hey," Jess said weakly, smile wavering.

Jake's eyes widened. He forgot why he was there, his whole plan for the Doll and Jess.

"What's wrong?" He asked instead.

Jess slumped, stepped aside and waved Jake into her room.

Once they were both seated on the edge of her bed, Jess spoke.

"Mom kicked Dad out," she said, voice breaking. Tears welled at the corners of her eyes. "She told me everything while you were out earlier."

Jess let out a little sob, those stunning grey eyes of hers wet with tears. Jake watched her, feeling both concerned and indifferent. He didn't like seeing Jess hurting like this, crying and in pain. And yet, he couldn't bring himself to care that their parents were splitting up. If anything, he felt relieved. Like a weight had been lifted.

"Turns out," Jess continued after regaining a little of her composure, "the woman Dad was having an affair with is the wife of his boss. His boss found out yesterday and fired him and called Mom and told her everything. That's what they were shouting about last night. Mom kicked him out. She said she's going to file for divorce."

Jake absorbed the information silently.

So his dumbass father had finally been called out. Fucking finally. With any luck, his mother would stop being a cunt to him from now on. Maybe, just maybe, she might even start being nice to him. That's what happened with divorces, right? Both parents sucked up to their children to be 'favourite'? Jake hoped so.

He pushed the thought from his mind, stared at his sister's face. She looked so sad and hurt. Her usual brightness was gone, her smile and energy evaporated. It felt wrong for Jess to be like this, unnatural.

But Jake could make her feel better, couldn't he?

He could comfort her like no-one else could.

Carefully, slowly, he reached into his hoodie's pocket, hand inching towards the Doll and the scrap paper.

"Thank you," Jess said. She smiled, a real smile this time.

The paper was between his fingers now. Just a little more...

"For what?" Jake asked.

"I-" Jess went silent the instant Jake slipped the paper into the Sinful Straw Doll. Her mouth fell open slightly, her eyes bulged, took on a distant look.

She blinked, looked at Jake. Her face flushed red.

"I..."

Jess shifted uncomfortably, glanced at her bedroom door, back at Jake. She blinked again, beads of sweat quickly forming on her brow. Jake reached out, put a hand on her knee.

"Are you okay?"

Jess looked down at the hand on her knee, seemed dazed by the contact. Her leg twitched under Jake's fingers and, slowly, ever so slightly, her legs spread apart.

She was wearing jeans, a regular pink t-shirt. Her chest was rising and falling, breath laboured, panting. The flush on her face spread over her shoulders, down her arms. She looked hot, uncomfortable.

"I..." Jess repeated.

And then she leaned in and kissed him.

Not a family kiss, an innocent peck. No, this was something else. A lover's kiss. Jake's first. Probably, he knew, his sister's first too.

Their lips met, parted for each other.

Heat and warmth and clumsy, wet saliva and tongues. Jake barely had a chance to take in the sensation before Jess was on top of them, pressing him down onto her bed, kissing him and touching him and holding onto his chest.

When Jess finally broke away from him, gasping for air, Jake got a good look at her.

Her long hair was suddenly messy, all over the place. Some of it fell over her face, hiding one of her eyes from sight. The rest of her face was red, coated in a sheen of sweat. Her mouth was open, her full lips wet with saliva.

He could still feel them, those lips, on his. Could still feel their warmth, their touch.

Without thinking, his hand rose, squeezed one of Jess' giant melons. They were so soft, even through the t-shirt and bra. So soft and comfortable...

Jess gasped, looked down at Jake as if seeing him there for the first time.

Her eyes widened.

"No!" Jess squealed. She swatted Jake's hand away, rolled over from on top of him, curled up into a ball next to him. He saw her hands shoot between her legs; at first, he thought, to block her crotch from him. Then he saw her hands had slipped under her jeans, were moving.

She was playing with herself, with Jake sat right next to her.

"Out!" Jess said, half-way between a command and a moan of pleasure. "Please! Out!"

Jake sat there, stunned, watching as his sister mindlessly fingered herself right in front of him. When he didn't get up to leave, Jess snatched one of her pillows, hit him with it.

"Out," she whined.

She hit him again, and he got the message.

Quickly as his feet would take him, he scampered for Jess' bedroom door, pausing there to look back at her.

His sister was still curled up into a ball, her t-shirt dishevelled, hair a mess, with her hands between her legs, under her jeans, playing with herself. Her moans and gasps filled the air, soft and sweet and erotic beyond words.

Jess threw her pillow at his head.

"Out!"

The grimoire had warned him. It had told him not to use the Doll right away, not before Jess was ready. Until Jess at least accepted the idea of having sex with her brother, she'd reject it outright. All the Doll did was overwhelm her with lust, it didn't change who she was and what she was and wasn't okay with. The grimoire had warned him, and he hadn't

listened.

And yet Jake couldn't stop himself from grinning. He touched his lips, touched where Jess had been kissing him. Making out with him.

That was enough. For now, that would do. Soon, he'd have everything he wanted. Soon, Jess would be his entirely. As long as he had the grimoire, it was a foregone conclusion.

Jake removed the note from the Sinful Straw Doll, snapped a Stick of Broken Memory.

Then he opened the grimoire, spilled some blood onto the last page with a question in his mind. A silent thought he wanted the book to answer for him. How could he make Jess fall in love with him using spells?

The blood moved, formed words.

*Vera knows you have the grimoire.*

Every letter was bold, jagged.

"Uh, yeah," Jake answered. Meeting the old woman, watching her descend into the Pit, seemed like forever ago now. "But it's fine. I was wearing the Crown. She doesn't know who I really am or anything."

The words swirled, and Jake could almost swear those swirls seemed *annoyed* at him.

*She'll find you. That's what she does. It's only a matter of time before she tracks you down.*

A little of his warmth and joy faded.

"It's fine," he said, feeling suddenly less certain. "I'll just get a few of her hairs and make a Stick. I'll make her forget she ever saw me."

*It's already too late for that. She knows how to protect herself from magic.*

Jake stared at the words, an odd sense of dread rising in him.

The grimore had called Vera a witch-hunter. That she'd stop at nothing to end him. It couldn't be that serious, could it? She was just an old woman, what could she possibly do?

*Vera destroyed my last true owner and kept me hidden from the world for decades. She'll come to do the same to you soon.*

Jake stared at the page, mind blank.

The words shifted again, slowly this time.

*That is, unless you complete the grimoire before she finds you.*